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RECENT BUDDHIST DISCOVERIES IN VISAKHAPATNAM DISTRICT A.P.

(Relic Caskets At Bavikonda)

By

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FOREWORD

"Believe nothing, O Monks, merely because you have been told it .... or because it is traditional, or because you yourselves have imagined it. Do not belive what your teacher tells you merely out of respect for the teacher. But whatsoever, after due examination and analysis, you find to be conducive to the good, the benefit, the welfare of all beings - that doctrine believe and cling to, and take it as your guide".

-- LORD BUDDHA

The excavations in Visakhapatnam District constitute a rare and unique series of remarkable finds in recent years. In this booklet, we have tried to give a brief description of these renowned discoveries at Bavikonda, Thotlakonda and Pavurallakonda. In all our efforts, we have worked under the constant guidance and scholarly inspiration of Sri S. Kasipandian, IAS, Principal Secretary (Education), Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, who has played a pivotal role in shedding light on these hidden treasures of an ancient civilization. I wish to thank Sri N.R.V. Prasad, Joint Director, Dr. B. Subrahmanyam, Research & Training Officer, Sri N.S. Ramachandra Murty, Assistant Director (Publications) and all other staff members of Archaeology & Museums Department, who have made a sincere and whole-hearted effort in bringing about this publication in record time.

Dr.S.K. PACHAURI, IAS
Commissioner, State Archives &
Archaeology and Museums,
Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad.

Whose conquests cannot be overthrown,

Whose conquests nobody equals in this world,

Whose realm is infinite, whose place you cannot locate,

By what steps can you know the way of the Buddha.

Dhammapada: V. 179.

RECENT BUDDHIST DISCOVERIES IN VISAKHAPATNAM DT., A.P.

(Relic caskets at Bavikonda)

INTRODUCTION

Coastal Andhra, North of the river Godavari, according to Sakti Samagama Tantra[1], formed part of ancient Kalinga. In *Mahabharata*[2], the region is identified as the land of the Kalingas on the coast of Bay of Bengal. The *Vessantara Jataka*[3] refers to Kalinga as a great commercial zone from which rice, fine cloth, ivory and diamonds were exported to foreign countries. *Kurudhamma Jataka*[4] and *Maha Vamsa*[5] mention that Dantapura was the capital of Kalingadhipati. Cunningham [6] also recorded that Brahma Datta, the king of Kalinga obtained the relics of Lord Buddha after his *Maha Parinirvana* from Kusinagara and enshrined them in seven *stupas* in his country. Dantapura, an ancient fortified habitation, still in ruins, is identified six miles North of Amudalavalasa in Srikakulam District.

Aranadha, the 18th Jaina Tirthankara appears to have visited Kalingadesa and the city of Raipura.[7] It is very well known that by the time of Asoka, Buddhism was in a predominant position in Kalinga and that after its conquest, he was very much influenced by the faith of the masses. However Magadhan hegemony over Kalinga slowly eclipsed during the rule of the weak successors of Asoka. The Chedi chief, Kharavela appears to have retrieved the Kingdom of Kalinga and also extended his sway upto Kannabenna in the south and plundered the flourishing marketing centre of Pithunda and declared himself as Kalingadhipati and Maha Meghavahana.[8]

The Nasik cave inscription of Gautami Balasiri describes Gautamiputra Satakarni as the Lord of Mahendragiri in Ganjam District.[9] The discovery of several Satavahana coins at Sisupalagarh in Orissa,[10] Salihundam in Srikakulam District[11], Jami in Vizianagaram District[12], and Lingarajupalem[13], Pavurallakonda[14], Thotlakonda[15], Bavikonda[16], and Sankaram[17] in Visakhapatnam District attest to the political control of the region in the hands of the Satavahanas, whose influence is concentrated around Dhanyakataka on the banks of river Krishna.

In *Suttanipata* and *Atthakatha*, Asmaka and Mulaka are referred to among the 16 ancient Maha Janapadas[18]. The XIII rock edict of Asoka at Erragudi and Rajulamandagiri clearly mentions Andhakas and Pulindas as living in the Mauryan empire[19] Recently, a fragmentary pillar inscription of Asoka was discovered at the *stupa* site in Amaravati[20] confirming the above statement.

There is no doubt that Buddhism was very much consolidated in Andhra-desa during the time of Asoka in 3rd century B.C. Innumerable Buddhist *stupas*, *chaitayas* and *viharas* have been identified during the last two decades covering the entire length and breadth of the State.

A general survey of the Buddhist sites in Andhra Pradesh reveals that the North coastal region played a dominant role in the propagation of Hinayana school of Buddhism. The Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Andhra Pradesh, brought to light a number of Buddhist settlements, perched on hill tops, over looking the sea, at Bavikonda, Thotlakonda and Pavurallakonda on the beach road from Vizag to Bhimili which provided a link from Salihundam in the north to Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda in the Krishna river basin through the coast of Bay of Bengal. The entire coast from Kalingapatnam to Arikamedu in the far South is approached through the sea with intermittent port sites with a flourishing trade activity with far off countries like Rome, Jawa, Sumatra and Borneo. The merchant community engaged in maritime trade, patronised Buddhism and Buddhist settlements. Hence, in almost all the above sites, Roman coins were invariably discovered at stratified levels.

BAVIKONDA

Bavikonda is situated at a distance of 16 Kms. away from Visakhapatnam on the beach road, leading to Bhimunipatnam, an ancient port site (fig. II). The place name appears to be of recent origin, as it denotes in Telugu, a Bavi 'well' and Konda a 'Hill', due to the presence of a number of rock-hewn wells on the hill top, possibly meant for storing rain water for the usage of the monks throughout the year. The Department conducted excavations here for five field seasons commencing from 1982 to 1987 and laid bare a *Mahachaitya*, several *votive stupas*, apsidal chaityagrihas, *stupa chaityas*, congregation hall, extensive *viharas*, rectangular halls and a refectory.

Maha Chaitya:

According to *Mahaparinibbanasutta, Stupas* are variously classified as Sariraka, Paribhogika and Uddesika. There seems to be a distinction between the terms *Stupa* and *Mahachaitya* as the inscriptions at Bhattiprolu[21], Amaravati[22], Nagarjunakonda[23] and Jaggayyapeta[24] refer to *Mahachaityas*,for, they contained the corporeal relics of Buddha. Similarly, the *Mahachaitya* at Bavikonda is ascribed to the Sariraka type, for, it contains ashy deposit, burnt charcoal and corporeal remains of a great Acharya, in a clay receptacle (Samudgaka) along with silver and gold caskets containing precious beads, at the cardinal points of the *anda*. They are deposited in the *anda* exactly at the centre of *the ayaka* platforms, where the devotees, after circumambulation on the upper *pradakshanapatha*, offer tributes. Placing relic caskets at diagonal points of the *anda*, on all the four sides and Buddha *padas* on northern and southern *ayaka* platforms shows the spiritual commitment and perfection achieved in the planning of the *stupa*. The well planned *vihara* in *trisala* model provided with an extensive congregation hall (28.50x28.50 mts.) at the centre with access to the secular structures in the complex, clearly denotes that the entire planning of the settlement was meticulously designed and executed with total dedication and reverence (Fig. III). The refectory and dining halls are planned to be commensurate with the needs of the inhabitants of the *vihara*.

The *mahachaitya* at Bavikonda is an imposing structure situated on the northern side of the *vihara*. It has four entrances measuring 3 mts. *wide* and 4.30 mts. long on the cardinal points. It is provided with a lower *pradakshanapatha*, a circular drum with projecting *ayaka* platforms, an upper *pradakshanapatha* on the top of the drum at the *ayaka* platform level, a hemispherical *anda* and a harmika surmounted by a *chhatra*. In front of each entrance leading to the lower *pradakshanapatha*, are exposed half moon steps in brick masonary(Pl. 1). Connecting these entrances, an outer railing is raised with brick wall 0.60 mt. high built in five courses. The flooring of the entrances and the lower *pradakshanapatha* were made up of lime concrete and given a smooth finish.

The drum has eleven courses of bricks rising to a height of 1.07 mts. The space over the drum which served as upper *pradakshanapatha* was paved with lime concrete over a brick base. It is reached by a flight of steps

attached to the *ayaka* platforms in a clock-wise pattern. It measured 1.50 mts. wide, exactly half the width of the lower *pradakshanapatha*. There are four *ayaka* platforms on all the four sides of the drum.

Broken *Buddhapada* slabs exquisitely carved with *ashtamangala* symbols have been exposed near the southern and northern *ayaka* platforms. The dome is extant to a height of 1.15 mts. containing 12 courses of bricks, with a dia. of 16.50 mts. at the base. The total height of the *chaitya*, in its present crumbled condition, is 2.25 mts. though the original height could easily be 8 or 9 mts. surmounted by a square *harmika*. The fragments of *chhatra* indicate the presence of a *chhatravali*. A hemispherical dome was built one metre thick in brick, duly filling the inside hollow space with rubble and red earth. The sizes of the bricks used in the construction of the *chaitya* range from 57x27x7, 54x27x7 and 50x25x7 cms.

Relic Caskets:

While renovating the *Mahachaitya*, Dr. B. Subrahmanyam, Research & Training Officer, discovered from the fallen debris over the *Mahachaitya*, four relic caskets in clay *(Samudgakas)* i.e. receptacles with silver and gold caskets containing precious beads, exactly at the diagonal points of the *anda* in the centre of the *ayaka* platforms. On the southern side, a *stupa* shaped khondalite receptacle was noticed containing a clay urn, silver and gold caskets with precious beads placed one within the other respectively. Further, an earthen urn or receptacle i.e. *Samudgaka*, large in size was found below the stone receptacle, which contains ashy deposit, burnt charcoal and corporeal remains of the Master, alongwith silver and gold caskets and a number of precious beads (Pl. 2). Its location on the southern side is of special importance, for, the southern quarter represents the abode of Yama, the Lord of Death. All the four clay receptacles were placed in red ware urns at the cardinal points. Each clay receptacle resembles a coconut shell in shape, provided with a knobbed lid on the top and decorated with incised pair of horizontal concentric grooves. The silver and gold caskets are profusely decorated with incised dotted *swastikas* and lotuses alternately. The gold caskets kept inside the silver caskets contain precious perforated minute beads of Torquois, pearls and corals. All the five gold caskets discovered are in a very good state of preservation. Their details are as follows:

Southern Side (A): Here a miniature *stupa* was found carved in khondalite stone measuring 36 cms. in height and 24 cms. in diameter divided into 2 parts viz. the lower container and the upper lid. The lower part represents the drum *(vedika)* and at its base are two applique projections separated by a prominent groove at the centre. The lower projection represents the outer railing while the upper projection represents the lower *pradakshanapatha.* The upper portion of the drum is exquisitely carved with a flat top, having 5 cms. thick drum wall representing the upper *pradakshanapatha.* The central portion of the drum is hollow (15 cms. diameter and 12.5 mts. deep) intended to keep the clay receptacle inside.

The bottom of the upper part of the receptacle is carved in such a way that it would exactly fit into the hollow portion of the lower half. The lid part represents the hemispherical *anda* with a 6.5 cms. square *harmika.* On the facade of the *Harmika,* two Brahmi characters reading "POYA" are noticed. Similar label inscription was found at Thotlakonda, reading "POYADHI" in the same characters datable to 3rd-2nd century B.C. "POYA" may be referring here, to one who gained knowledge of Poyasutta. Above the *harmika* is the conical knob which represents the base of the *chhatra.* Inside the container are, a clay receptacle, silver and gold caskets, one within the other. The clay receptacle in red ware is also a replica of a *stupa* (10 cms. height and 10.75 cms. diameter). It is divided into two halves. The upper lid, conical in shape has a prominent knob at the top with three pairs of concentric grooves. The lower half has a slightly sagger base with an incurved featureless thick rim meant to fix the upper lid. All the five clay receptacles are more or less equal in size with similar designs. The lids of the metal caskets are decorated with lotus and *swastika* designs. The gold casket also is similar to the others in shape and size. But the decoration of *swastika* and lotus are separated by dotted spokes. It has two dotted incised concentric circles with a projected knob at the top. Inside the gold casket, there is only one small green colour torquois bead.

(B) This is an urn big in size (23x20 cms.) but similar to the other clay receptacles, having a conical lid (broken) containing ashy deposit, burnt charcoal and a triangular bone piece along with silver and gold caskets (Pl. 4). The gold casket in the urn is more or less of the same size, as others on the east and west. But the upper portion of the lid has an embossed *chakra*

with a prominent knob at the top. The design is very conspicuous and it is in association with the corporeal remains preserved in the urn. Inside it are, a piece of minute thin gold sheet, two green torquois, five light brown coral beads, four big, eight medium sized and 30 minute silver beads. Altogether there are fifty beads (Pl. 5).

Northern side: This also is a terracotta receptacle found in an urn cut into two parts. It contains a silver casket (upper part mutilated) and a gold casket one within the other. The *swastika* and lotus designs on the silver caskets are separated by dotted designs and dotted vertical spokes connecting the upper circle and the lower concentric circle at the rim of the lid. The gold casket is comparatively a bigger one measuring a diameter. of 2.5 cms. and resembles a *stupa*. This is in two parts. The lower half is plain whereas the upper lid is decorated with *swastika* and lotus designs, alternately four each, separated by dotted spokes connecting the dotted concentric circle. Above this there is an elevated top decorated with two concentric dotted circles and connected by spokes and a prominent knob. Inside are found one green torqouis and another coral bead (Pl. 6).

Western Side: Like the above, this also is a terracota receptacle, found in an urn, looking like a coconut shell divided into two halves and provided with a knobbed lid in which the silver casket and gold caskets are found, containing brownish coral bead, and five small perforated pearls. The lids of the silver and gold caskets are decorated with lotus and *swastika* designs with a knob at the top (Pl. 7).

The eastern and western gold caskets are decorated more or less with the same designs. The lid contains *swastikas* and lotuses intercepted by vertical and dotted spokes. Above the *swastikas,* there are three concentric dotted circles and a knob at the top.

Eastern Side: This also is a terracotta receptacle found in an urn in two parts. Within are found silver and gold caskets. The silver and gold caskets also look like a *stupa*. The gold casket in two parts contained four beads (pl. 8). one Torquois and three pearls.

The northern silver casket and the casket in the urn on the south are bigger in size. The upper lid is decorated with dotted incised *swastika* and

lotuses, each numbering four alternately. Above this, there are three dotted incised concentric circles in a centrifugal manner along with a conical knob at the top. All the gold and silver caskets are made of thin sheet. The decoration over the gold and silver caskets appears to have been executed with a sharp point and a wooden hammer, a technique of engraving by the *swarnakaras* of the ancient period which shows their artistic dexterity. These auspicious symbols namely *chakra, swastika* and lotus on the caskets and two fishes, *triratna*, standard, *poornakalasa,* and *srivatsa* on the Buddhapadas represent the orthodox nature of the Theravada school.

Relic caskets have been reported from Bhattiprolu[25], Guntupalli[26], Salihundam[27], Amaravati[28], Gudivada[29], Ghantasala[30], Ramatirtham[31], Sankaram[32], Gummadīduru[33], Nagarjuna Konda[34] and Thimmavaram[35] etc., in Andhra Pradesh. Relic caskets with a little quantity of ash and few beads have been reported from Bhattiprolu and Nagarjunakonda. But the discovery of a medium sized red ware urn, containing huge quantity of ash and charcoal and a corporeal relic and silver and gold caskets with semi-precious beads like torqouis, coral and pearls is unique without any parallel, at any known site in Andhra Pradesh.

In the excavations, Roman silver coins belonging to **Avgvstvs Caesar** (31 B.C. to 14 A.D.), Tiberius (14 A.D. to 37 A.D.) and one Satavahana lead coin have come to light. The Roman coin belonging to Avgvstvs Caesar bears the bust of the Emperor with a legend "**CAESAR AVGVSTVS DIVI FPATER PATRIAE**" on the obverse and the figure of Livia seated towards right with a legend "**PANTIF MAXIM**" on the reverse. The other two coins of **TIBERIUS** bear a legend "**TI CAESAR DIVI AVG F AUGVSTVS**" on the obverse and a legend at the reverse reading "**PONTIF MAXIM**". The Satavahana lead coin bears the figure of a lion on the obverse with an indistinct legend. The obverse is abraded. On the basis of coins, inscriptional data, pottery and other stone carvings, the settlement at Bavikonda appears to have flourished from 3rd century B.C. to 2nd century A.D.

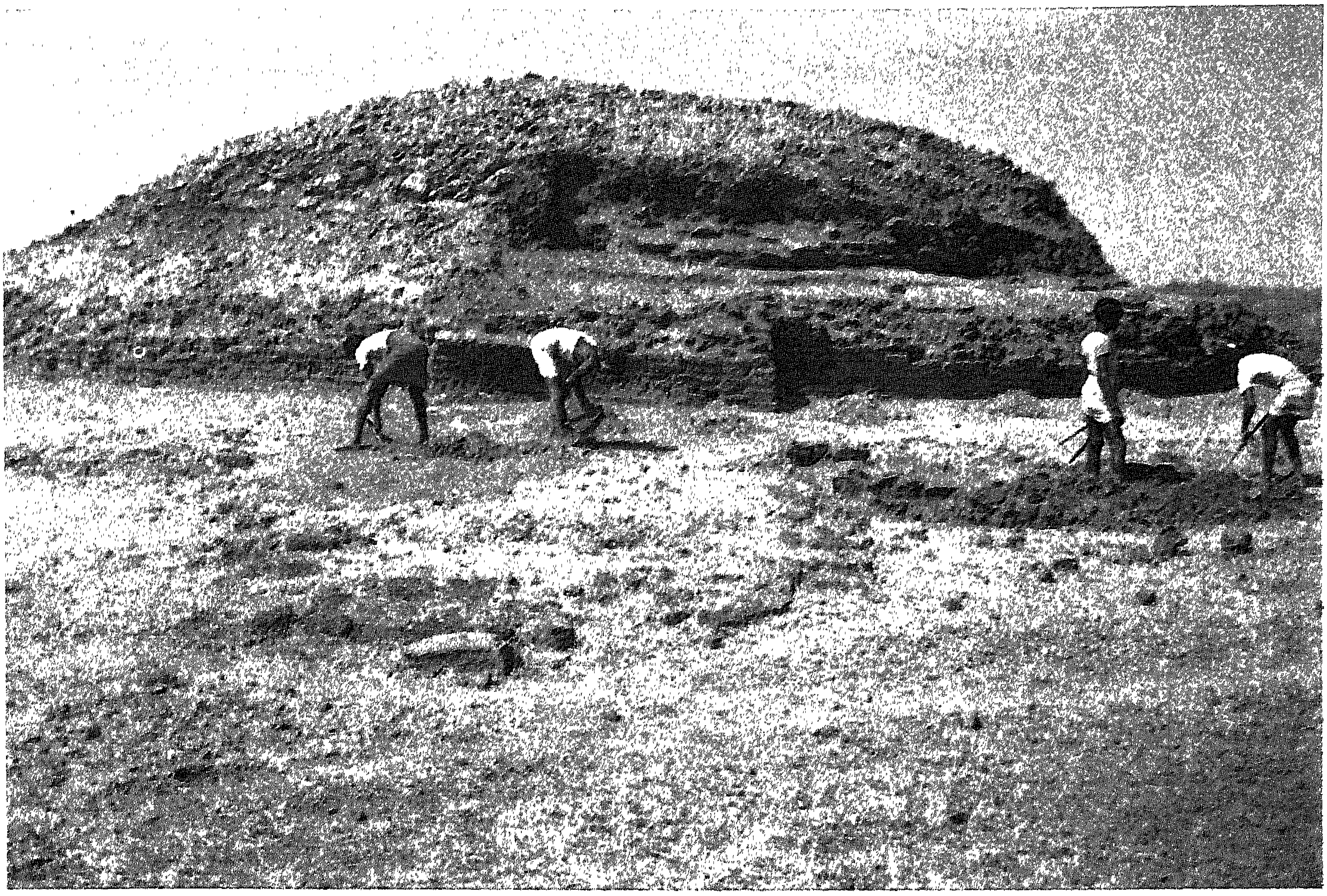
Thotlakonda, another Hinayana Buddhist settlement close by, has also been excavated by the Department of Archaeology & Museums, Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad. Here also, a number of *stupas, chaityas, a trisala vihara,* a congregation hall, rectangular halls and a refectory have come to light. A *chhatra* piece contains a Brahmi label inscription reading "HASA DANAM

CHHATA KOTURA KIRI NIVASINA" and "POYADHI" datable to 3rd-2nd centuries B.C.[36] *Buddhapadas* depicting *Dharmachakra* in the middle of the sole, *triratna* on the heel and *swastika* and fish on the toes with the space in between the toes and heel filled with figures of *purnaghatas* and *srivatsa* are unique.

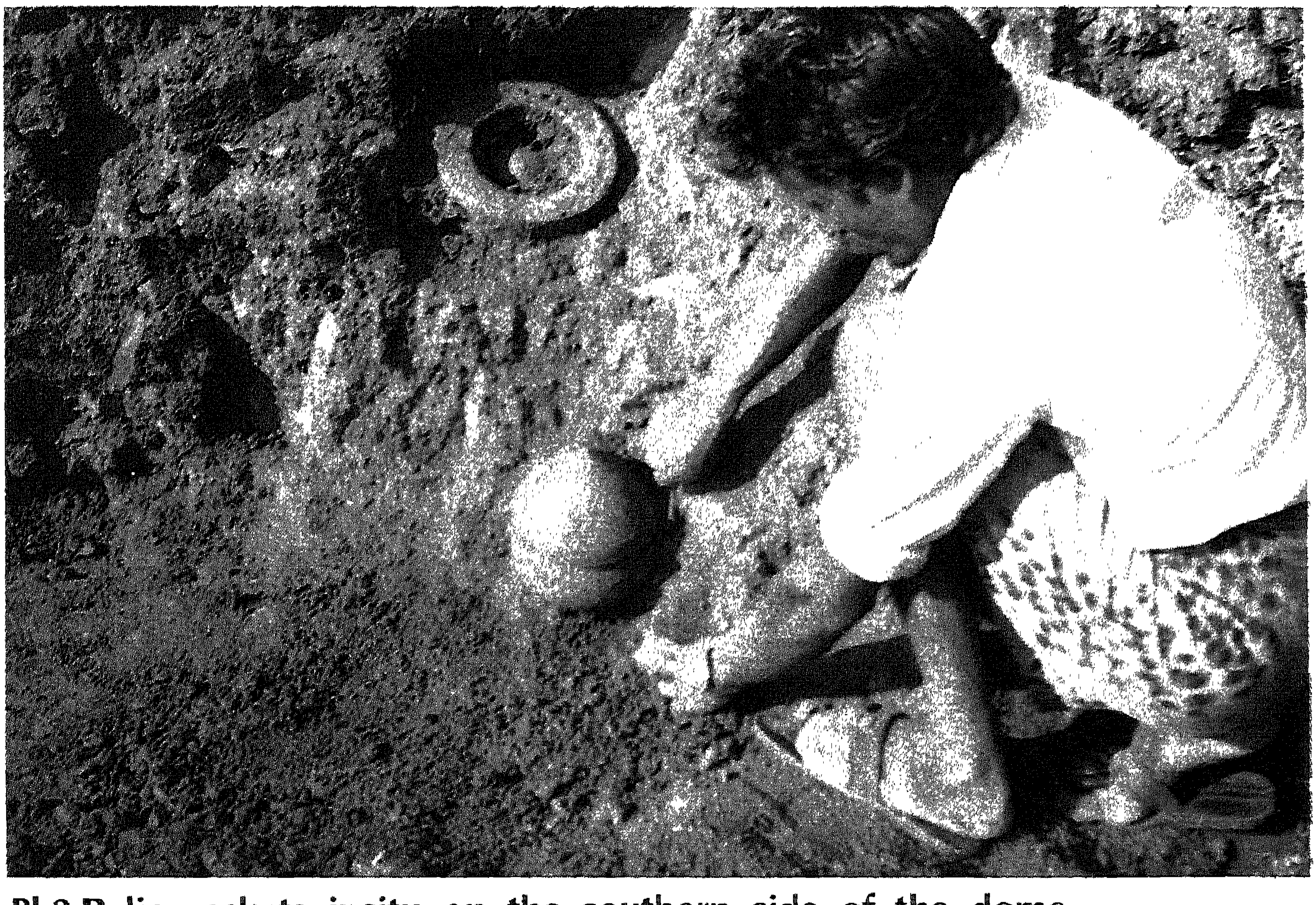
A number of Satavahana coins have also been exposed in the course of excavations, representing Satakarni, Siri Sata and Siriyana, having on the obverse a ship with two masts anchored on the shore and a tree with railing on its right. This is a unique discovery testifying to the maritime trade during this period.

Some early Brahmi label inscriptions datable to Mauryan period have been discovered at Pavurallakonda (near Bhimunipatnam, an ancient port site) where excavations are in progress. They read as "KUVANA PAULA GAMENA TATAKA CHHATA MATAPA DANAM and KUMARIKALA" near the entrance of the tank. Palaeographically, the latter inscription is datable to 3rd-2nd centuries B.C.[37] To the North of the central *stupa* is found a copper casket in two parts which might have been enshrined in the *stupa*. Two inscribed potsherds in Brahmi characters of 1st-2nd centuries A.D. reading "BUDHINISA" and "MALATI" were also recovered along with lead Satavahana coins. Further excavations are expected to reveal conclusive evidences to understand the philosophy behind the establishment of these settlements. The site is of strategic importance and appears to be the earliest among the three, namely Bavikonda, Thotlakonda and Pavurallakonda.

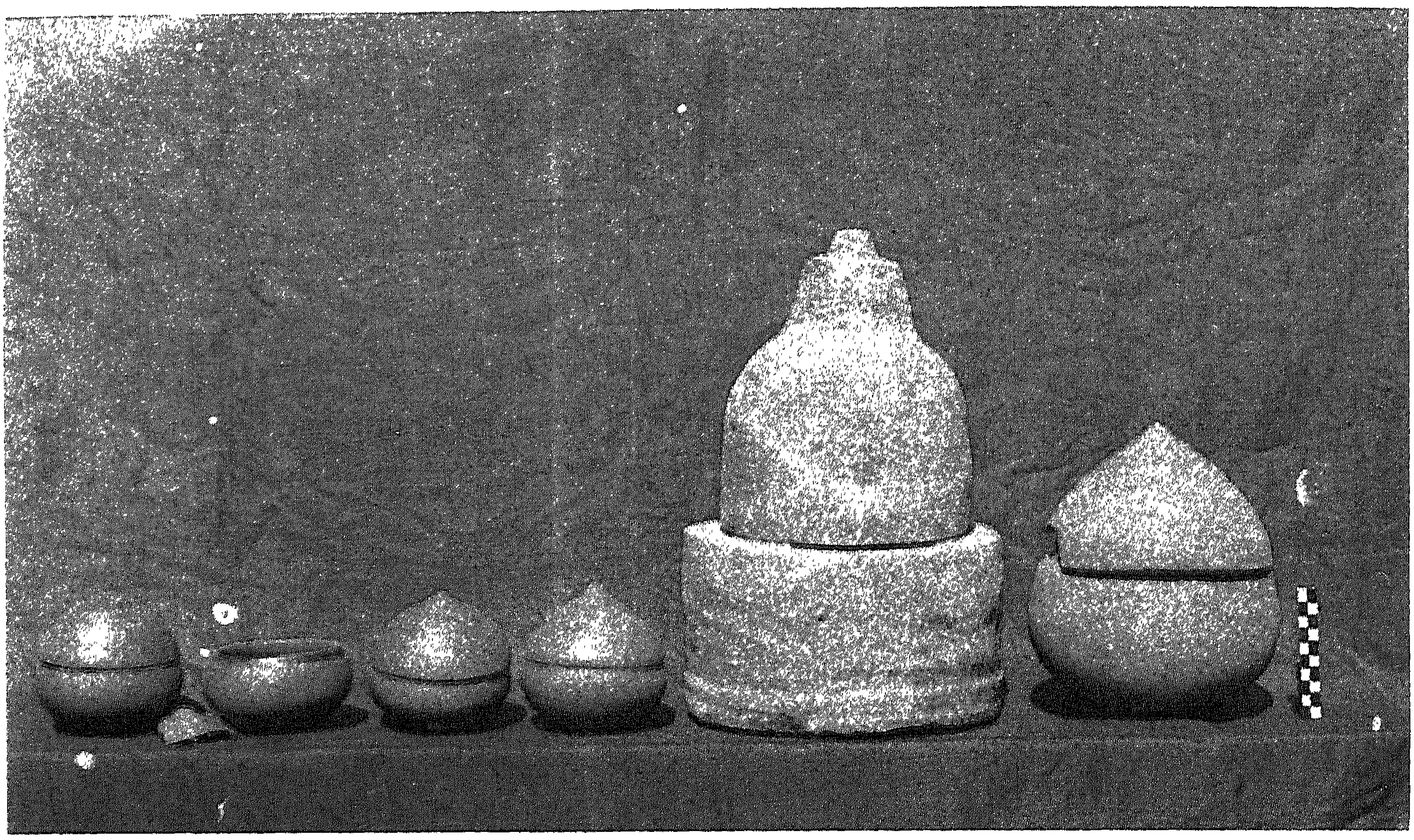
Another Hinayana Buddhist settlement has also been brought to light at Gopalapatnam[38] in the same district. Here excavations revealed *stupas* and a *chatussala* type of *vihara*, besides black and red ware pottery, rouletted ware, Northern Black Polished ware and knobbed ware pottery. The occurrence of N.B.P. and knobbed wares in the northern coast of Andhra Pradesh is a unique feature. An interesting discovery is a pot sherd inscribed in Brahmi characters reading "MEGHA KALA", datable to 1st century A.D. A stone carving of Lajja Gauri, i.e. a nude squatting Mother Goddess, a lady playing Gitar like stringed musical instrument and the Naga sculptures are also very interesting. The presence of Lajja Gauri, i.e. the nude squatting Mother Goddess in the region north of Godavary, suggests the advent of Vajrayana cult.



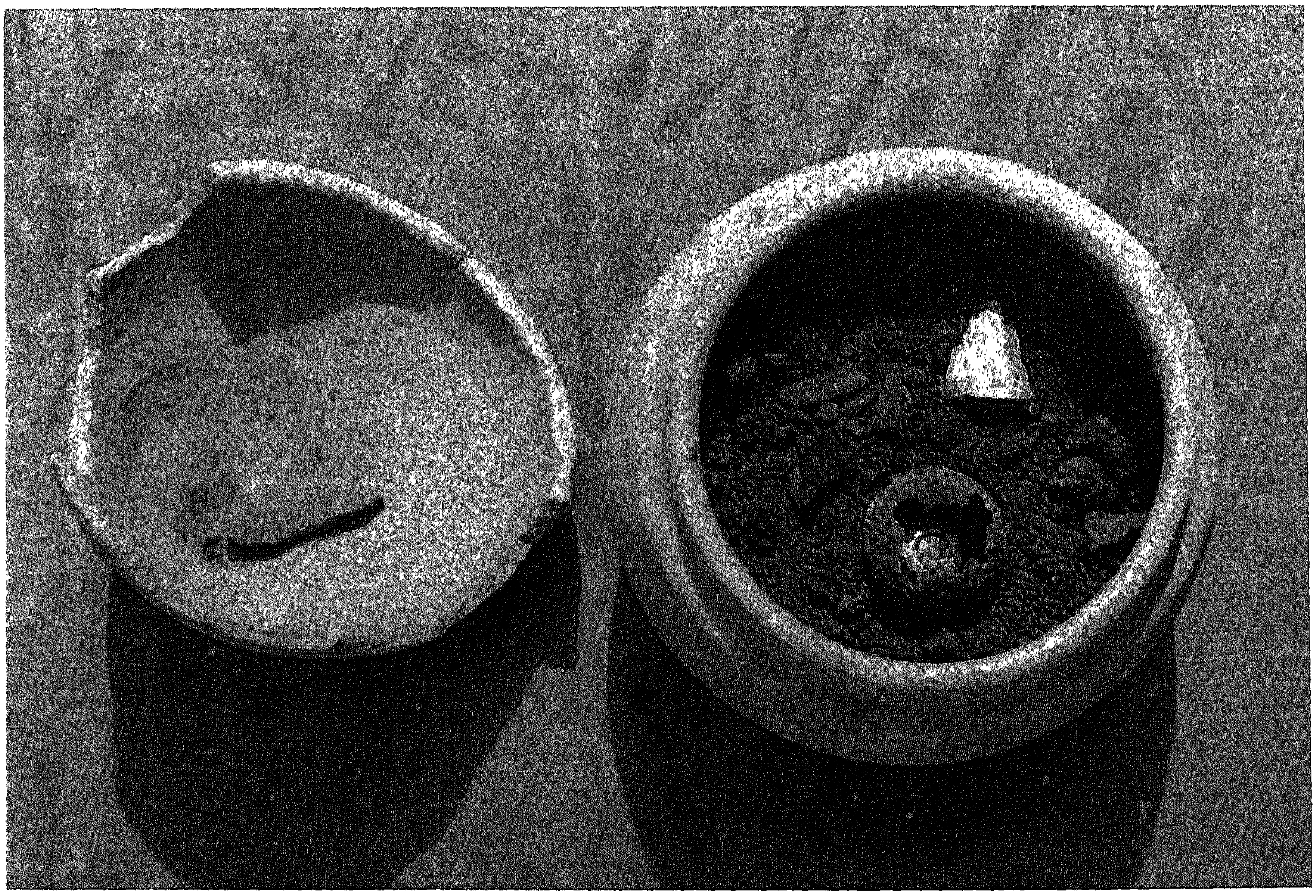
Pl.1.General view of the Maha Stupa



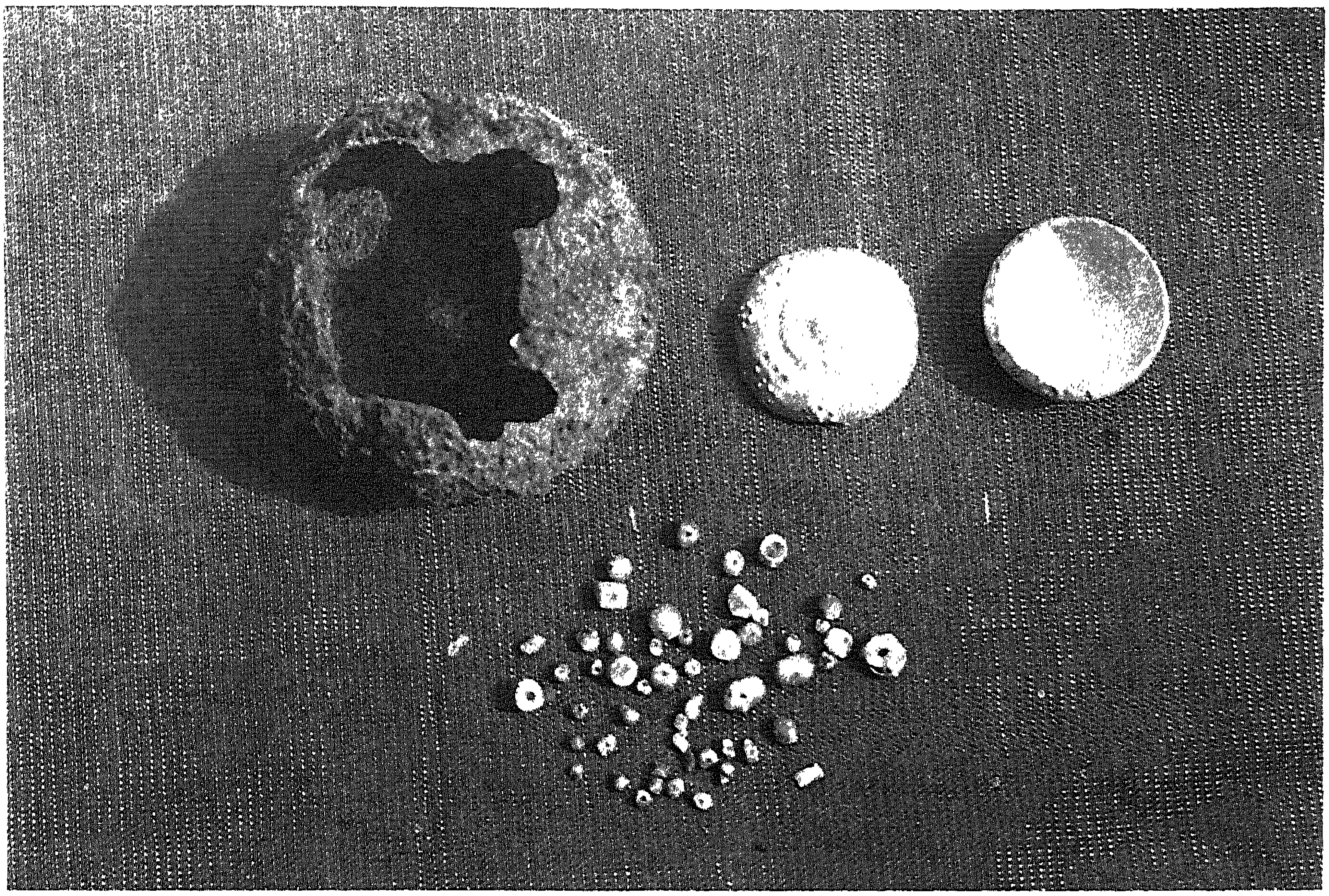
Pl.2.Relic caskets insitu on the southern side of the dome



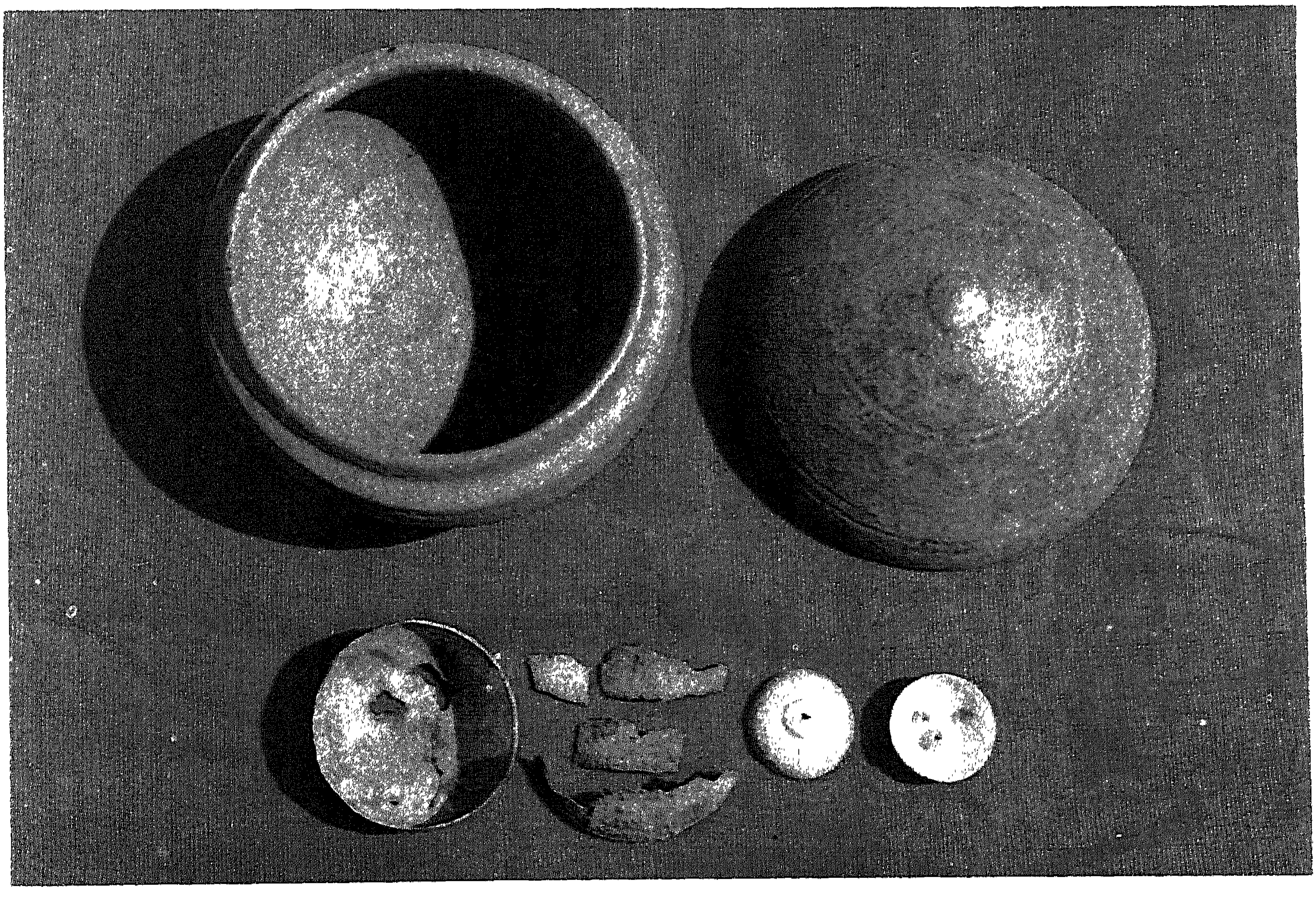
Pl.3.Stone and terracotta receptacles and urn



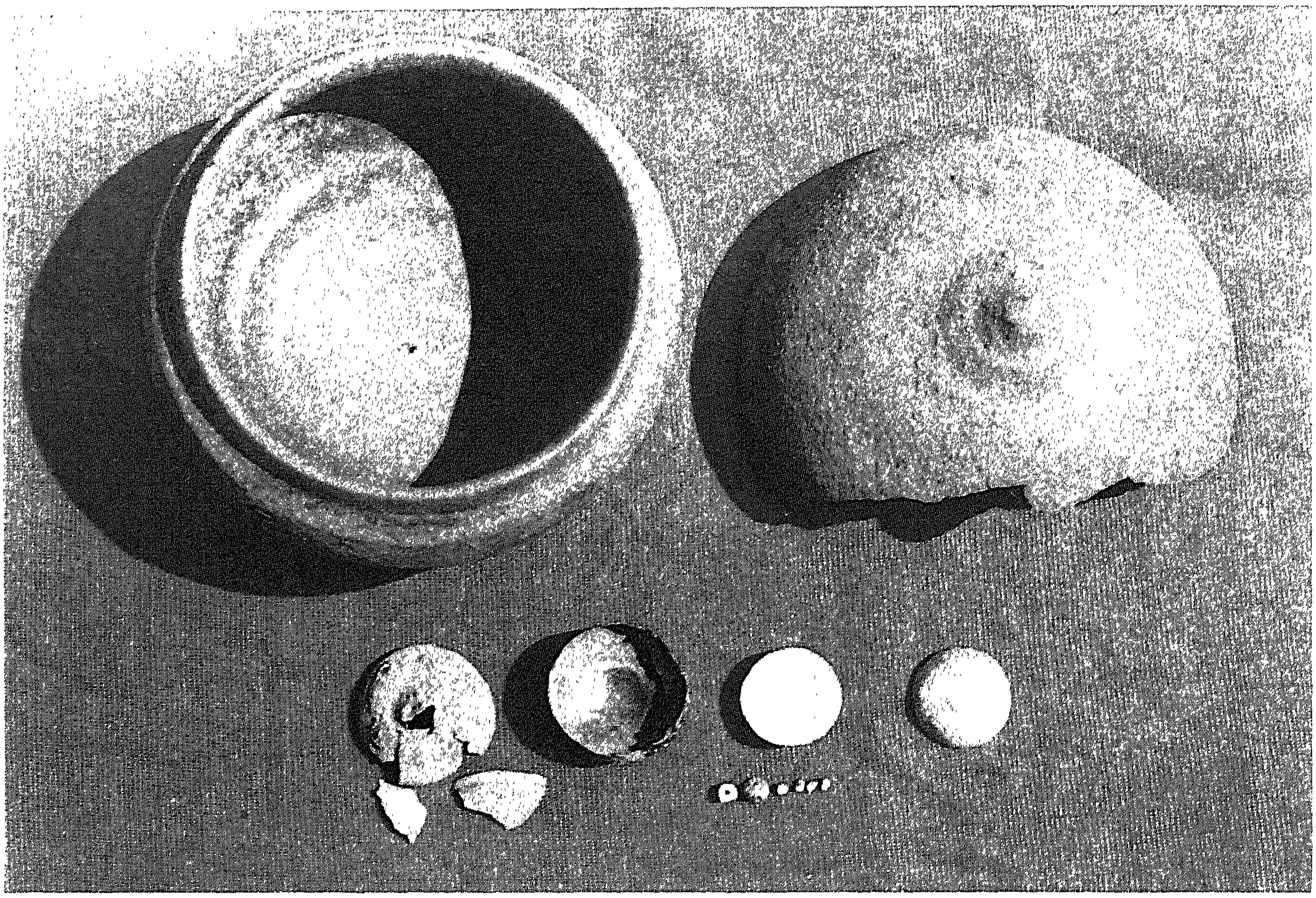
Pl.4.Urn containing silver and gold caskets showing a piece of bone and charcoal



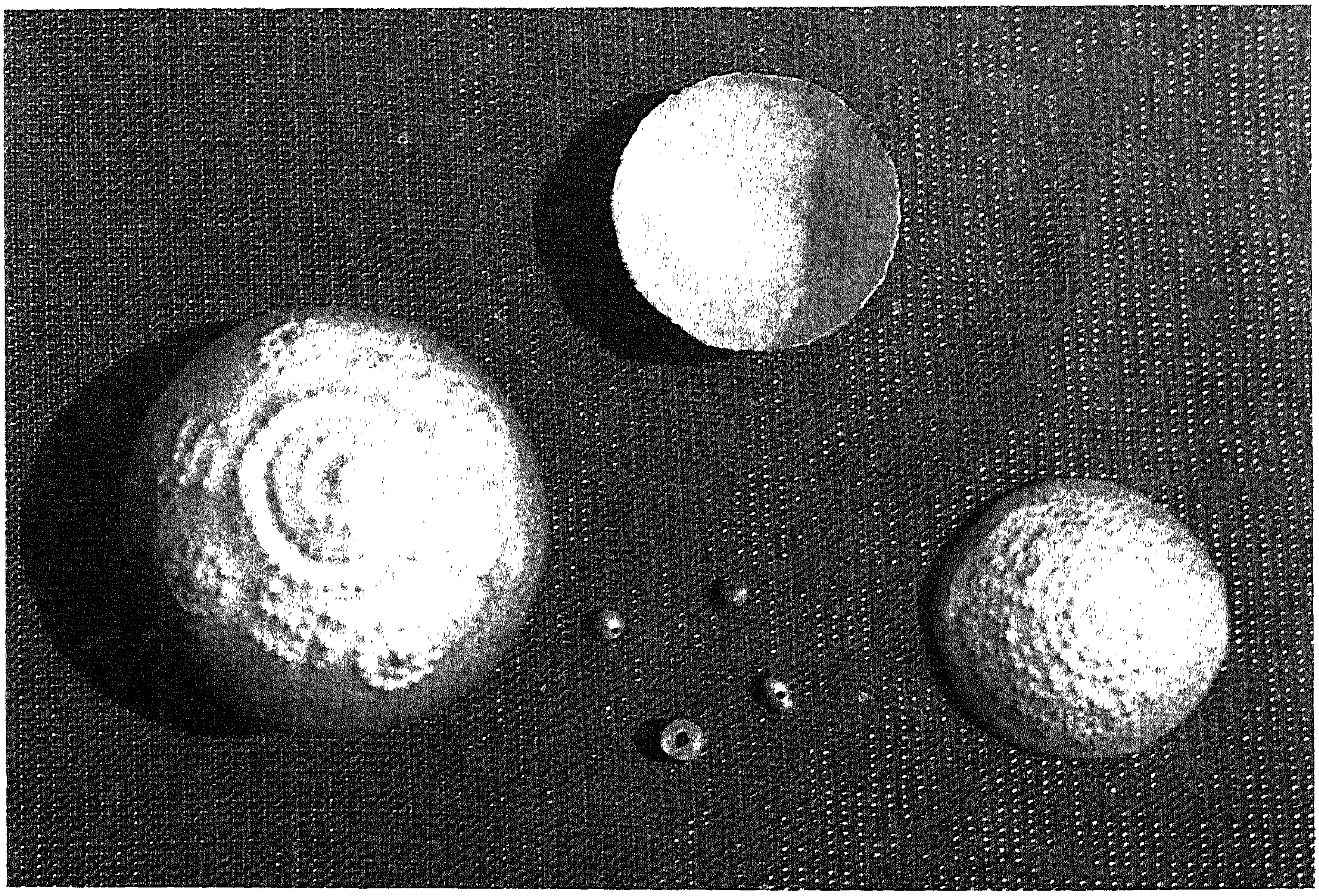
Pl.5.Silver and gold caskets with beads in the urn-Southern side



Pl.6.Terracotta receptacle, silver and gold caskets and beads - northern side



Pl.7.Terracota receptacle, silver & gold caskets with beads - western side



Pl.8.Silver and gold caskets and beads Eastern side

Taking into consideration various aspects of the cultural assemblages brought to light at the above sites, without any semblance of evidence for Buddha idols except *Buddhapadas, Dharmachakras, Swastikas,* the throne of Buddha and *Triratna* symbols, it is presumed that the above sites never felt the impact of Mahayanism and it was the Theravada school (Hinayanism) which dominated the northern coast and witnessed its hey-day at Bavikonda, Thotlakonda, Pavurallakonda and Gopalapatnam in Visakhapatnam district.

However, Mahayanism also appears at Sankaram[39] and Lingarajupalem[40] in the District as indicated by the presence of Buddha idols and it cotinued to flourish till the Vajrayana period i.e. 4th-5th centuries A.D., whereas at Gopàlapatnam, as a result of the discovery of Lajja Gauri stone plaque, Vishnukundi coins and other cultural melieu, the site appears to have directly received the Vajrayana element in to its main orthodox school without the influence of Mahayanism.

The selection of sites for the development of these religious settlements on the hill tops, prompted by the vast expanse of the sea, with salubrious climate and ecstatic surroundings, shows beyond any doubt that the settlements have also served the needs of the mercantile community, engaged in maritime trade with whose munificence they have survived, in the continuous religious pursuit for a period of more than four hundred years.

In the absence of conclusive epigraphical data on the stone, clay and metal receptacles, it is difficult to precisely date and ascribe the corporeal remains to Lord Buddha or any other great teacher of the Buddhist pantheon or any royal personage.

To understand the nature and purpose of the above unique finds, it is absolutely necessary to study in greater detail the associated material as well as the excavated brick structures.

An analytical study reveals that the *Mahachaitya* at Bavikonda has a simple and superb architectural style, with a plain brick outer railing, devoid of any ornamentation, clockwise staircases leading to the *ayaka* platforms and the upper *pradakshanapatha,* the location of Buddhapadas profusely decorated with *Ashtamangala* symbols on the southern and northern *ayaka* platforms and inscribed Brahmi labels in Mauryan characters and ceramics like red ware,

black and red ware etc., clearly establish that this Hinayana centre flourished for a couple of centuries before Christ.

The procedure followed in depositing ash, burnt charcoal and charred bone in an earthen urn with a lid, reminds us of the contemporary burial customs followed by megalithic folk in 4th-3rd centuries B.C.

The presence of carved *Buddhapada* slabs on the northern and southern *ayaka* platforms is an important factor to be reckoned with. Perhaps nowhere in the known Buddhist sites in Andhra Pradesh, *Buddhapadas* are placed before the corporeal remains as object of worship facing the *ayaka* platform. The discovery of an urn with plenty of corporeal remains exactly facing the southern *ayaka* platform indicates that it was chosen, as it is the abode of Yama, the Lord of Death. Similarly, the occurrence of bigger silver and gold caskets on the northern side seem to indicate the direction of the birth place of the Lord, i.e. at Lumbini.

Thotlakonda, a nearby site brought to light a good number of *Buddhapada* slabs from separate platforms but not on the *stupa*. From this, it is obvious that the *Buddhapadas* were placed on independent platforms as against the *Stupa*, if raised over the relics of an *acharya*. It is also equally difficult to believe that any *acharya* received equal respect and honour as the Master. Because of the meticulous care taken in preserving the corporeal remains in the dome and placing of *Buddhapadas* in front of the relic caskets over the *ayaka* platforms, it indicates the preeminence of Lord Buddha, as otherwise the name of the *acharya* would have been clearly mentioned on the caskets as seen at many other places. There are recorded evidences though of a later date, at Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, and Jaggayyapeta, which show that the corporeal remains belonged to Lord Buddha.

The available evidences like the early carving technique on the caskets with *ashtamangala* symbols and a simple brick outer railing around the *stupa* and the Brahmi label inscriptions datable to 3rd century B.C., clearly suggest a pre-Asokan date for the *Mahachaitya* established at the monastery over the hill top at Bavikonda.

Tradition and contemporary literature reveal that the corporeal remains of the Buddha were distributed among eight kings in order to enshrine them in

the *stupas*. After the Kalinga War, Asoka caused the corporeal remains c Buddha to be dug out from Seven *stupas,* out of eight, and distributed th remains among 84,000 parts to be enshrined in various *stupas* built within th Mauryan empire. But there is no reliable reference for the removal of relic from the eighth stupa. Keeping in view the extensive Buddhist settlements ir the vicinity of Bavikonda datable from 3rd century B.C., it is unreasonable tc dismiss that an orthodox Theravada centre like Bavikonda missed their attentior to enshrine the relics of the great Master. There is an inscription on a stone trough found at Thotlakonda reading "DONA DATTI CHIMAKA CHIKA MAYA 10 DASAMA DI ..... MATA SENAKAGIRI NI (VASI) NA BHA (RI) YA ..... CHINA[41], which means that the wife of Chikamaya son of Chimaka, the resident of *Senakagiri* endowed by Dona, donated the trough for the usage of monks of the *Vihara.* 'Syena' in Sanskrit is known as eagle, 'giri' is a hill with monastic establishment nearby Thotlakonda. Bavikonda looks like a seated eagle.. Since Bavikonda is an early settlement with a *Mahachaitya,* it is quite likely that a resident of this Vihara donated the trough *Danta Dhatu Charitra* refers to Dona, a brahmin who divided the corporeal remains of Buddha into eight parts and distributed to eight kings. Dona Datti Senakagiri in all likelyhood appears to be the monastic complex of Bavikonda.

Because of the large quantity of ash, charcoal and bone in an earthen urn, it is quite likely that the eighth part of the corporeal remains of Lord Buddha might be the same enshrined in the *Mahachaitya* at Bavikonda, as this is a unique place located in Madhyama Kalinga. Due to the importance of the site, it is guessed that a cluster of Buddhist settlements have developed in the vicinity at Thotlakonda, Pavurallakonda, Sankaram, Dharapalem, Gopalapatnam and Lingarajupalem. Interestingly, near this settlement, there are two hills called Kailasagiri and Rishikonda, where monks used to stay. Further, the villagers who are residing at the foot of the Bavikonda hillock bear the Sir name *Buddhala*, which seems to suggest that the impact of this Buddhist centre is so much that it has penetrated into the mainstream of the masses at large and its traces are still visible through personal and Sir names.

Such a great centre was abandoned due to various reasons. Perhaps the decline and decay of these settlements may be due to the lack of patronage as a result of shifting of trade centres, increased popularity of *Mahayanism* and finally the revival of Brahmanical faith.

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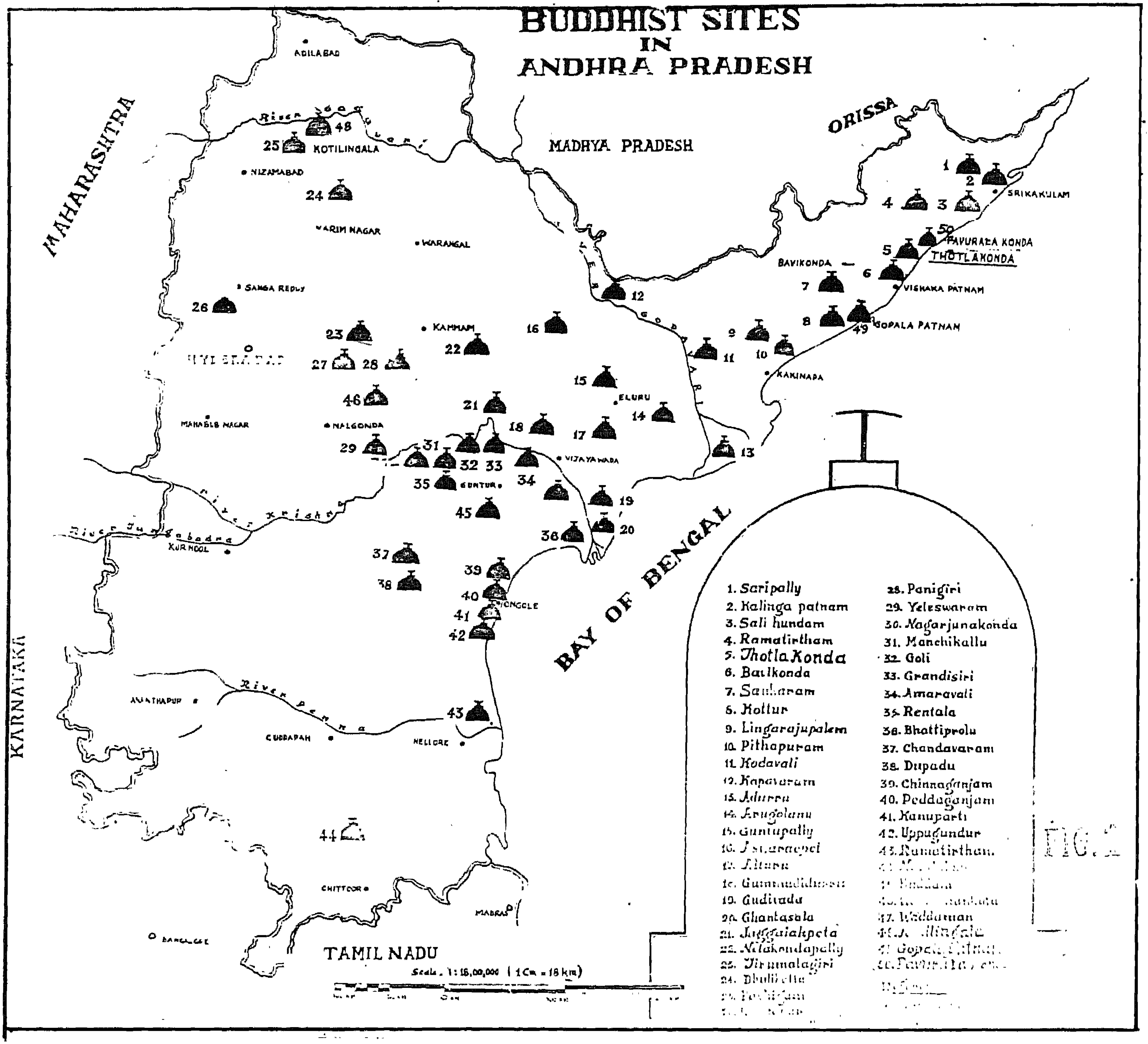
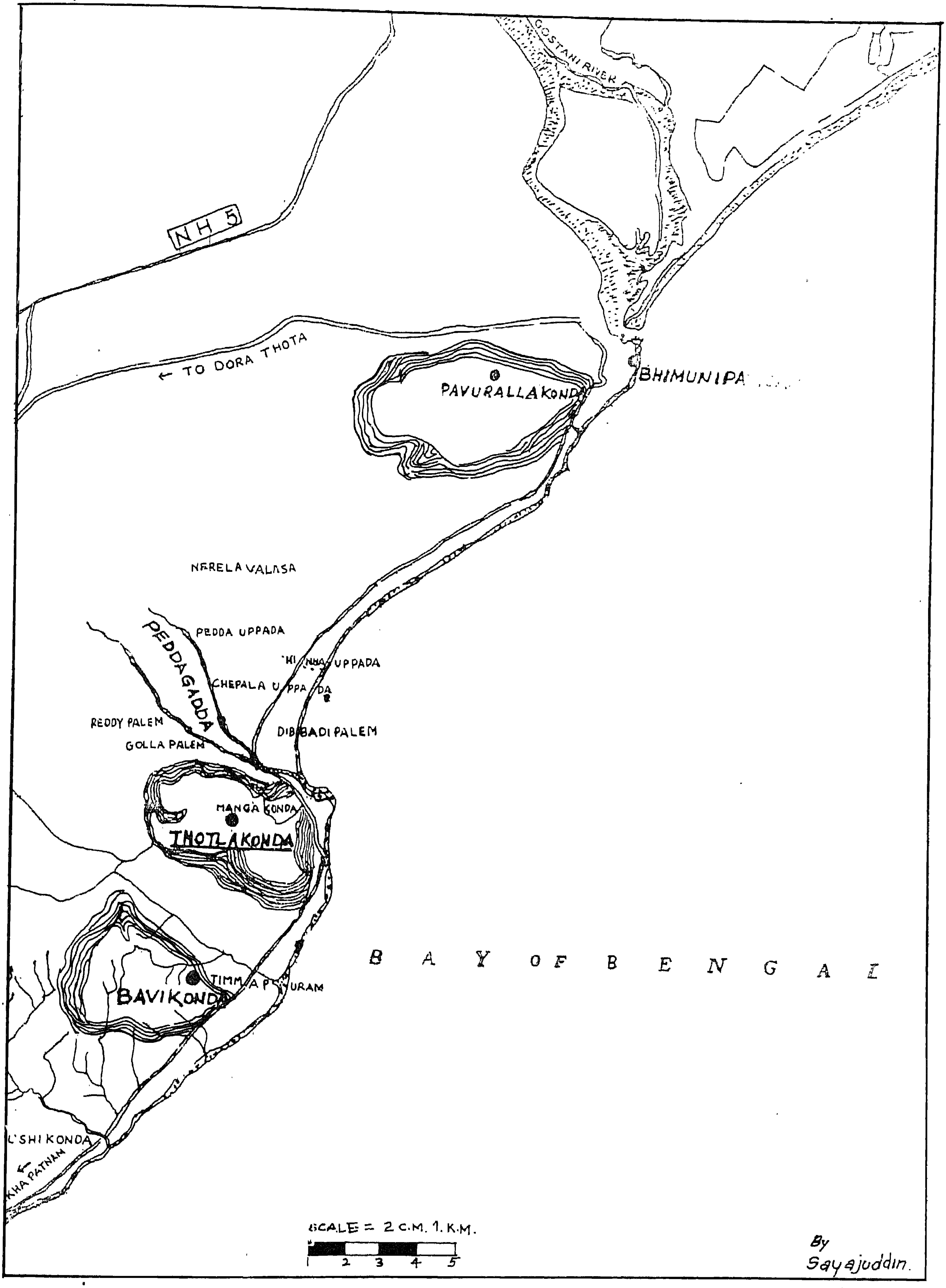
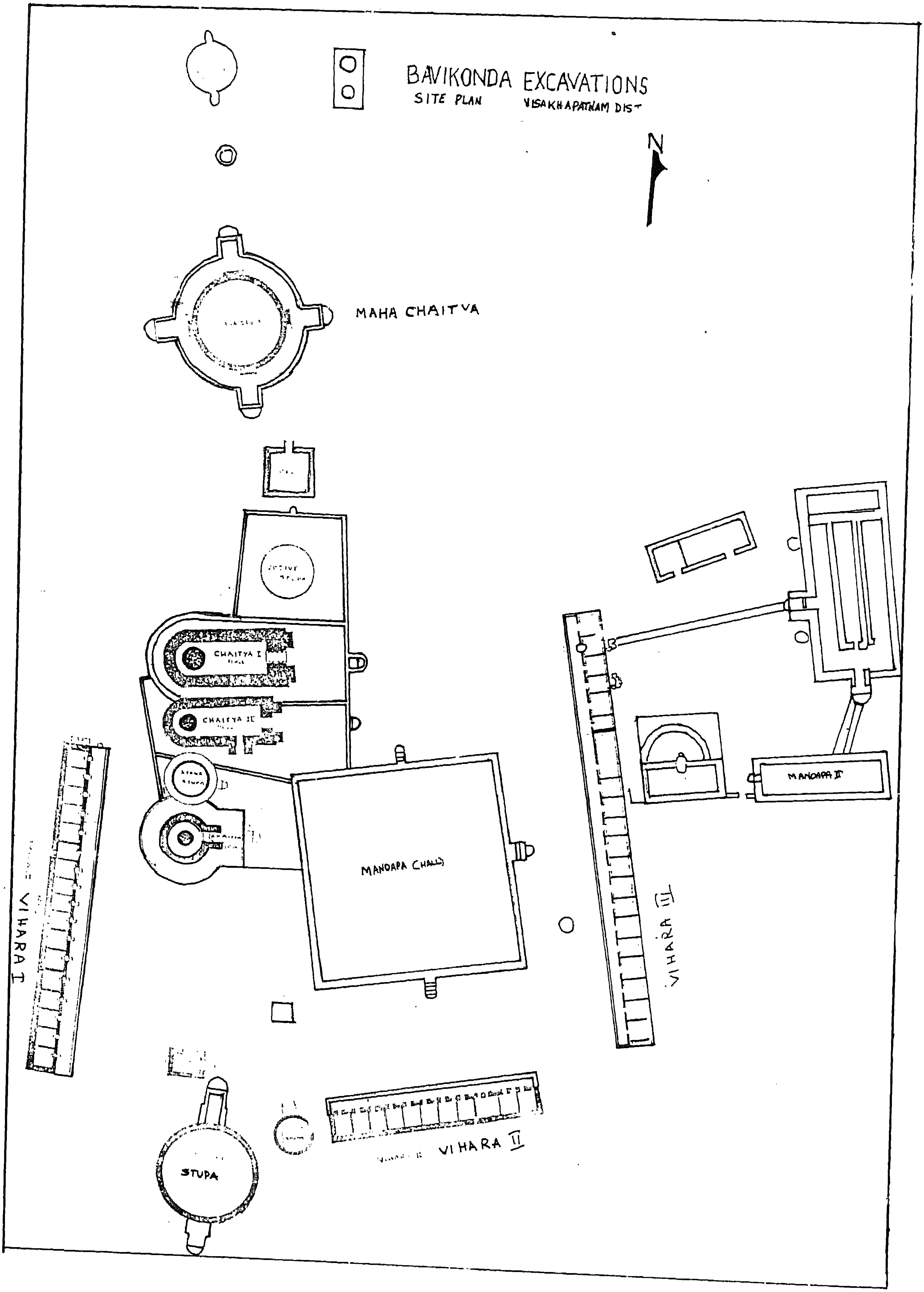


BUDDHIST SITES IN ANDHRA PRADESH
MAHARASHTRA
MADHYA PRADESH
ORISSA
KARNATAKA
TAMIL NADU
BAY OF BENGAL
ADILABAD
KOTILINGALA
NIZAMABAD
KARIM NAGAR
WARANGAL
SANGA REDDY
KAMMAM
MAHABUB NAGAR
NALGONDA
ELURU
VIJAYAWADA
GUNTUR
KURNOOL
ONGOLE
ANANTHAPUR
CUDDAPAH
NELLORE
CHITTOOR
MADRAS
BANGALORE
SRIKAKULAM
PAVURALA KONDA
THOTLAKONDA
BAVIKONDA
VISHAKA PATNAM
GOPALA PATNAM
KAKINADA
River Godavari
River Krishna
River Tungabadra
River Penna
Scale . 1 : 18,00,000 (1 Cm = 18 km)
1. Saripally
2. Kalinga patnam
3. Sali hundam
4. Ramatirtham
5. Jhotla Konda
6. Bavikonda
7. Sankaram
8. Kottur
9. Lingarajupalem
10. Pithapuram
11. Kodavali
12. Kapavaram
13. Adurru
14. Arugolanu
15. Guntupally
17. Eluru
19. Gudivada
20. Ghantasala
21. Jaggaiahpeta
22. Nelakondapally
23. Tirumalagiri
24. Dhulikatta
28. Panigiri
29. Yeleswaram
30. Nagarjunakonda
31. Manchikallu
32. Goli
33. Grandisiri
34. Amaravati
35. Rentala
36. Bhattiprolu
37. Chandavaram
38. Dupadu
39. Chinnaganjam
40. Peddaganjam
41. Kanuparti
42. Uppugundur
43. Ramatirtham
47. Weddaman


GOSTANI RIVER
NH 5
← TO DORA THOTA
PAVURALLAKOND
BHIMUNIPA
NERELA VALASA
PEDDA UPPADA
PEDDAGADDA
UPPADA
CHEPALA UPPADA
REDDY PALEM
GOLLA PALEM
DIBBADI PALEM
MANGA KONDA
THOTLAKONDA
BAVIKONDA
TIMMA
URAM
B A Y OF B E N G A L
SHI KONDA
KHA PATNAM
SCALE = 2 C.M. 1. K.M.
1 2 3 4 5
By
Sayajuddin.


BAVIKONDA EXCAVATIONS
SITE PLAN
VISAKHAPATNAM DIST
N
MAHA CHAITYA
CHAITYA I
CHAITYA II
MANDAPA (HALL)
MANDAPA II
VIHARA I
VIHARA II
VIHARA III
STUPA

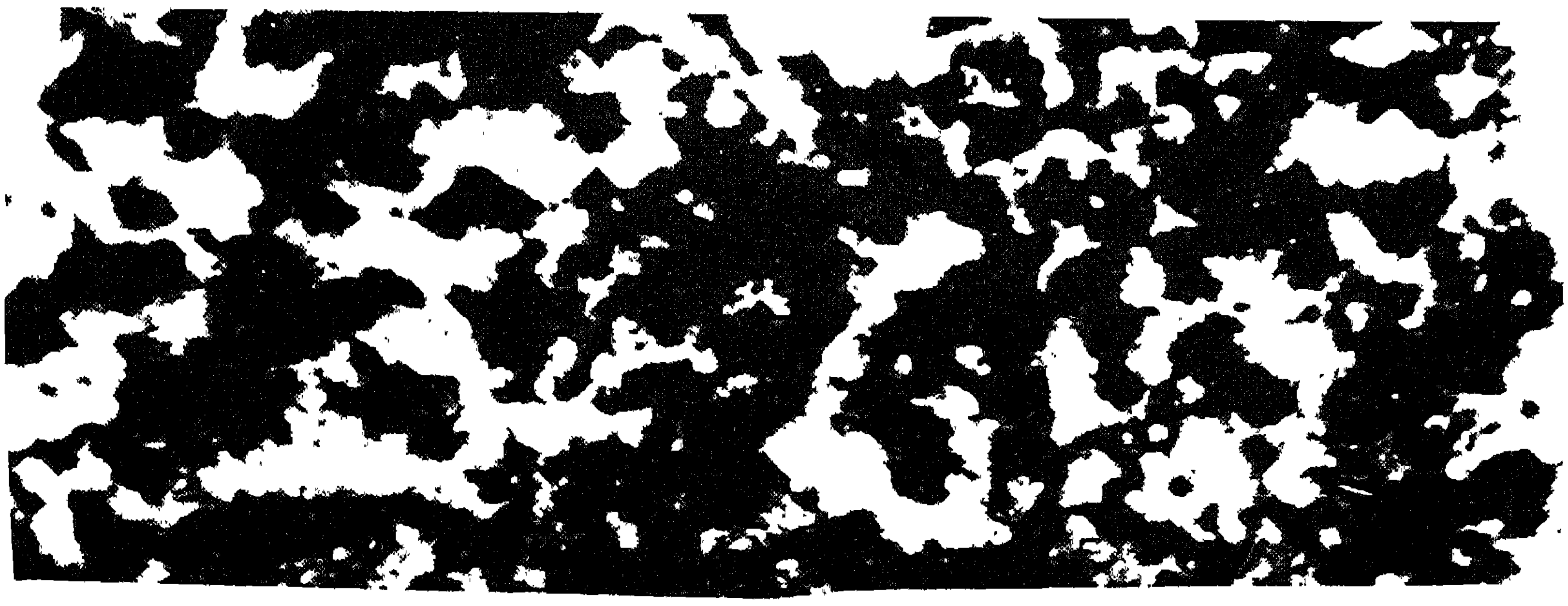
1) Brahmi label inscription "KUMARIKALA" Pavurallakonda.

2

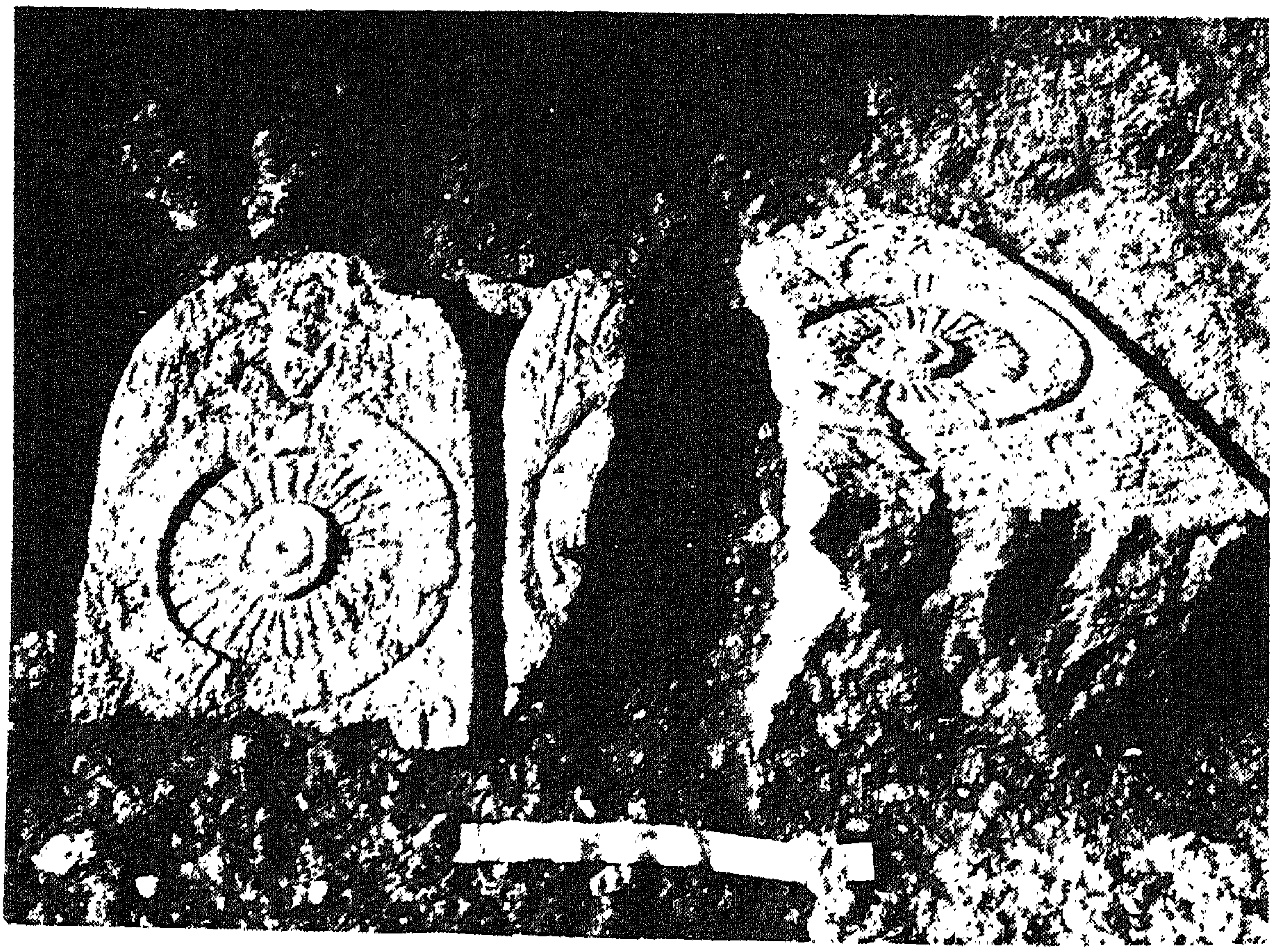
3

2) Brahmi letters "POYADHI" a Chhatra piece. Thotlakonda.

3) Brahmi letters reading "POYA" on the *Harmika* of the stone receptacle. (Bavikonda)

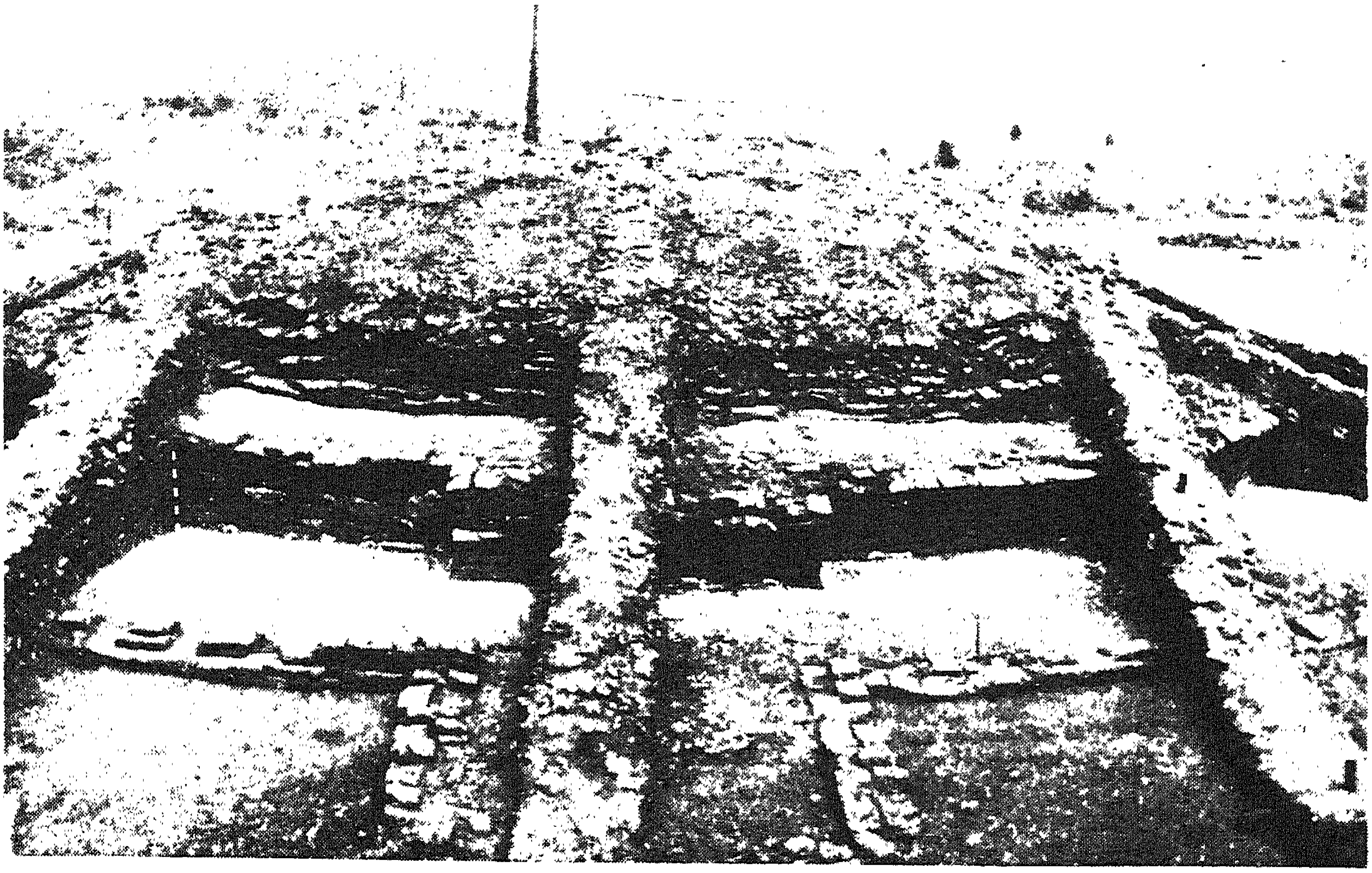


4) Close up view of the letters "POYA"

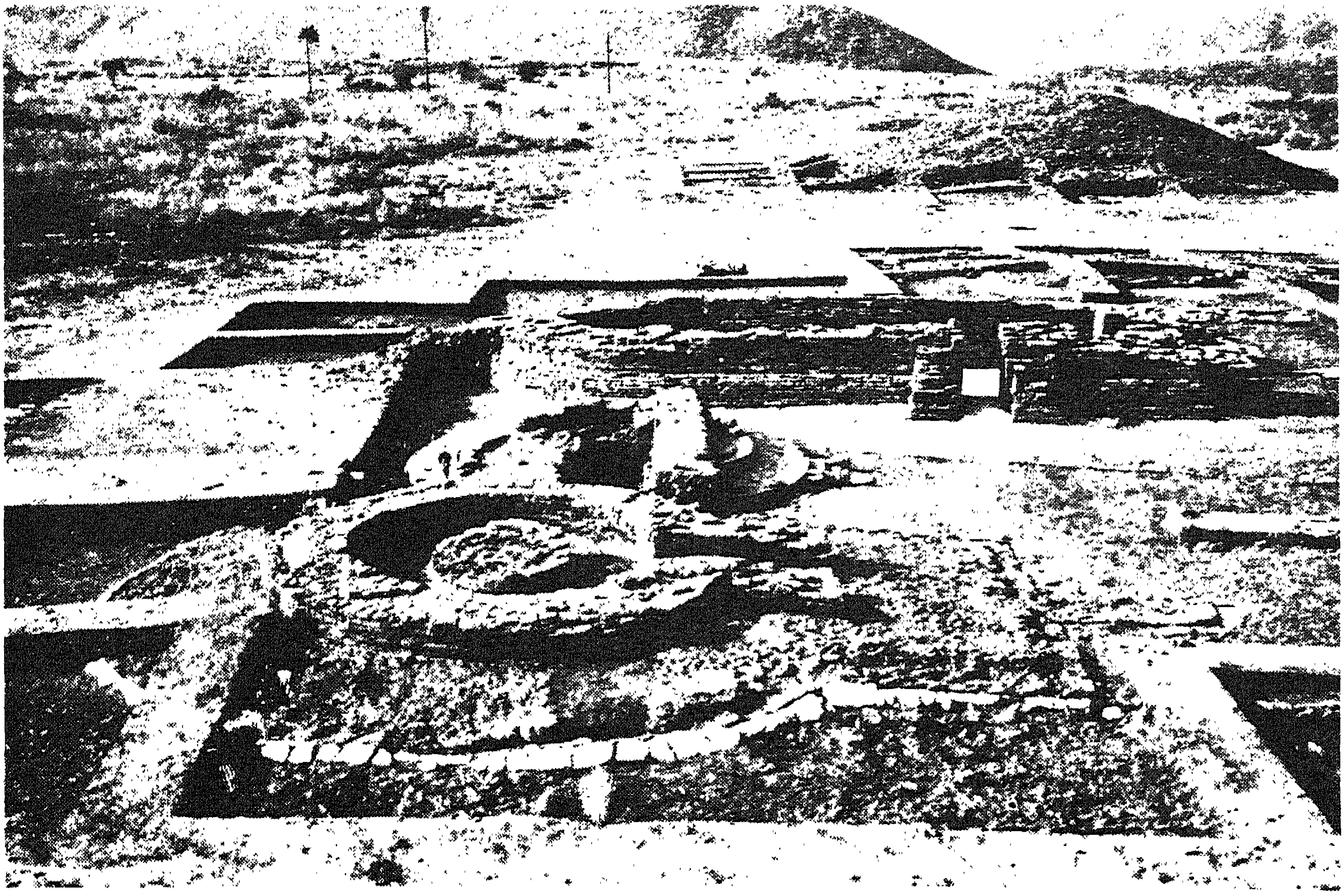


5) Buddhapadas Bavikonda

6) Buddhapadas. Thotlakonda.



8) Mahachaitya showing outer brick railing (Bavikonda)



7) General view of Apsidal, circular and stone stupas. (Bavikonda)

9) Urn with a conical lid. (Bavikonda)

10) Close up view of the bone piece and charcoal.